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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A "NEW CAREERS" PROGRAM IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL.

BY- PRUGER, ROBERT
CONTRA COSTA COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

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DESCRIPTORS- *CAREER OPPORTUNITIES, CASE STUDIES (EDUCATION), ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, *LOW INCOME GROUPS, PROGRAM EVALUATION, *QUALIFICATIONS, RECRUITMENT, *SCHOOL AIDES, SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP, *TRAINING, TEACHER AIDES,

UNDER THE NEW CAREERS PROGRAM 16 LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS SELECTED FROM 175 APPLICANTS, WERE TRAINED AS SCHOOL-COMMUNITY WORKERS (SCW) AND ASSIGNED TO VARIOUS ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN RICHMOND, CALIFORNIA. THE JOB REQUIREMENTS WERE--(1) HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA OR EXPERIENCE IN A DIRECT, PERSON-TO-PERSON RELATIONSHIP IN SCHOOL OR IN SOCIAL SERVICE RELATED WORK, (2) THE CAPABILITY OF BEING TRAINED FOR THE JOB, (3) THE MATURITY, MOTIVATION AND ABILITY TO RELATE TO SCHOOL PERSONNEL, STUDENTS AND PARENTS, (4) THE ABILITY TO CONDUCT AND RECORD HOME INTERVIEWS, (5) THE CAPABILITY OF LEADING PARENT DISCUSSION GROUPS, AND (6) THE ABILITY TO REPRESENT THE SCHOOL AND DISCUSS ITS PROGRAMS WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS. THE GROUP PARTICIPATED IN A 9-WEEK ORIENTATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM WHICH INCLUDED WORK WITH YOUTH, COMMUNITY, JOB CORPS, AND EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES. DURING THE SUMMER THE SCWS ALSO PARTICIPATED IN A SEPARATE PROGRAM SPECIFICALLY ORIENTED TO THEIR JOBS IN THE SCHOOLS. THE SCW'S ACTUAL TASKS ENCOMPASSED (A) INDIVIDUAL CASE WORK IN WHICH THE SCW CONDUCTS A CONTINUED RELATIONSHIP WITH THE STUDENT, HIS PARENTS AND HIS TEACHER (A MANAGEABLE CASE LOAD IS 8), (B) DIRECT REFERRALS OF STUDENTS WHOSE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR HAS REQUIRED IMMEDIATE ATTENTION, (C) COMMUNITY CONTACTS IN WHICH SCHOOL PROGRAMS ARE INTERPRETED TO THE PARENTS AND SUPPORT FOR THE SCHOOL PTA IS DEVELOPED. PRINCIPALS AND SUPERVISORS AGREED THAT THESE AND OTHER TASKS PERFORMED WITH CHILDREN AND PARENTS BY SCWS WERE OF GREAT HELP. (LC)

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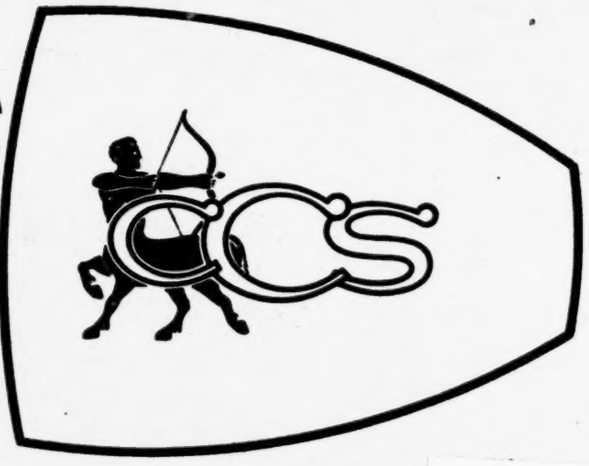

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by

ROBERT PRUGER

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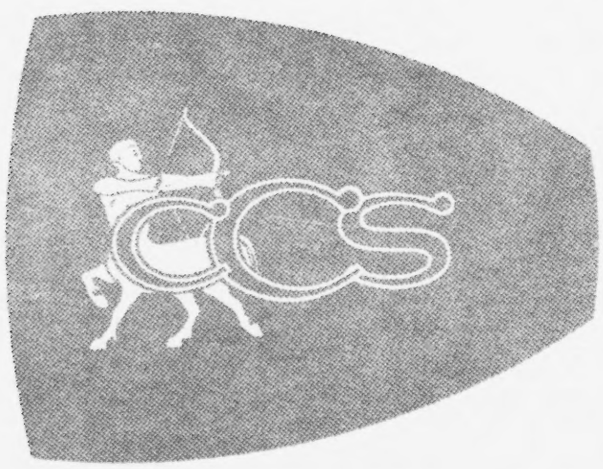

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The Establishment of A "New Careers" Program In A Public School

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INTRODUCTION

Periodically events make it necessary to reach into the inventory of questions long-brewing in the intellectual community and make public policy issues of them. In this decade of anti-poverty, it has happened in wholesale fashion. Enduring dilemmas of our social order, well articulated in social science and popularly accepted as the sorry but unavoidable price of progress, have suddenly, willy-nilly and ready-or-not become relevant to men of practical affairs. It may be some time before we know if these men prescribe correctly from what the social scientist has described conceptually, but there seems to be little argument that they finally are working in appropriate spheres and with timely issues.

Through demonstration and pilot programs of many kinds the first generation of projects born of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 is currently exploring promising prescriptive paths through some of these societal dilemmas. However skillful these agencies may be, they are bound to show their lack of experience; however inept they may be, they are bound to contribute to social progress by attracting and holding attention to the societal issues of this decade. In either case, they are responsible for informing the second generation of projects born of Economic Opportunity Acts yet-to-come and will do this to the extent that they are described and the descriptions made generally available. This document is one such description and takes

for its subject the New Careers Program of the Richmond (California) Community Development Demonstration Project, with specific reference to that program as it was joined to the Richmond Unified School District.

All the material used in this document was gathered through interviews with personnel associated with the program and from documents that are part of the program record.

THE BEGINNINGS

The first formal description of the New Careers Program appears in the application for funding prepared by the Contra Costa Council of Community Services and submitted by it to the Office of Economic Opportunity. The proposal dated December 4, 1964 was quickly approved. Upon approval, the Richmond Community Development Demonstration Project (hereafter referred to as the "Project"), encompassing two major program units, came into being. The first unit, the Indigenous Organizations Program, provides for "different kinds of support to indigenous organizations in fulfilling caretaking efforts for their constituents" and is described in a separate Project publication.(1) The second unit, described in detail below, is the New Careers Program (hereafter referred to as the "Program").

These two separate programs issue from a single assumptive base understood in the following terms: a reciprocally problematic stalemate exists between the low-income community and the established service bureaucracies of that community. By this arrangement accommodating and compelling forces have pushed the two along inverse and distant paths. Thus, the poverty population has enhanced its social survival capacity at the price of its social mobility potential; the service bureaucracies in turn, at

least vis-a-vis that population, have immunized themselves against the strains and inconveniences arising out of their social accountability at the price of their increasing social irrelevance.

To break this stalemate both partners to the interaction are seen as the logical and necessary targets of intervention. The Project, therefore, set out to influence both. The Indigenous Organizations Program is primarily directed to the low-income community seeking to unsettle its apathy or motivated inaction by enhancing its instrumental capabilities. The New Careers Program is primarily directed to the established community service systems seeking to help them position themselves to better "hear" the low-income community so that the continuing need to change with that community could be negotiated through continuing, orderly and constructive processes.

In contrast to the rationale supporting the New Careers Program, its operational details are quite simple. Twelve persons, "new careerists", from Richmond's low-income community were to be recruited to fill specially and newly created positions in the Richmond Police Department,(2) the Survey Research Center of the University of California at Berkeley, and the Richmond Unified School District; eight other new careerists were to serve as "community workers" in the Indigenous Organizations Program. Job assignments were to include some type of service work with the client population of the agency as well as the opportunity to come into contact with community groups and organizations. The Project and the various host agencies were to share certain functions (training and supervision) and finally each host agency was to demonstrate support for the program by providing some of the required resources (e.g., office space, supervisory staff time to assist Project staff in developing the program, etc.).

With one emerging exception all of the above considerations identified in the proposal as being essential are now established features of the program as it has developed within the Richmond Unified School District. To whatever degree the simplicity of these considerations may have contributed to their acceptance, in and of themselves they could not insure a simple interactional process between the Project and the School District. Among other reasons, simplicity of interaction was disallowed by the presence of several unusually strong-willed Project and School personnel; real and imagined, and perhaps unavoidable, violations of protocol and other manifestations of unwritten inter-organizational expectation; significantly fixed, limited and often unsympathetic perceptions of each agency by each agency; and the lack of specific consensus, even within each agency, about program objectives. It is striking however, that the content of the essential program conditions defined in the Project proposal was itself rarely a locus of complication or controversy.

NEGOTIATING THE PROGRAM

Program Approval

The first inter-organizational contacts relevant to the Program took place in January and February of 1965. They occurred in the form of discussions between the Director of the Richmond Community Development Demonstration Project and the Superintendent of the Richmond Unified School District, the highest ranking administrative officers of their respective agencies. From these meetings with little apparent participation from other staff members of either agency (more easily explained in the Project's case, since as a newly funded agency it was yet to hire its complement of key personnel), emerged the effective decision to move ahead with the program.

Though it is quite obvious that this decision was made, it is not entirely clear if it was made explicitly and at some specific moment in time or whether it merely evolved implicitly out of the process of discussing problems anticipated in these early conversations between the two administrators. (Nor is it known whether either method for coming to a decision represented the conscious strategic choice of either or both negotiators.) This vagueness is somewhat reflected in the fact that the formal contract between the Project and the School District (see Illus-

tration A) was not signed until December, several months after staff members from both agencies began carrying official program responsibilities. (The contract between the Project and the Richmond Police Department on the other hand and for whatever reasons, had attracted more specific attention and was worked out much more quickly.)

Nothing said so far ought condition or obfuscate the fact that the Program would and could not have been joined to the Richmond Unified School District without the Superintendent's approval. And not only were other relevant school personnel not effectively involved in coming to this decision, but at least in one sense it appears that they did not expect to be.

A distinctive characteristic of complex bureaucratic organizations, however, would suggest that the Superintendent's approval, though a necessary condition of action, was not a sufficient one. In this instance, lower ranking administrative personnel, particularly school principals, assumed their prerogatives to act not from the Superintendent's general approval of the Program but from his specific delegations of authority to operate in it. Whether intended or not, the slow or unclear delegation of authority that occurred did substantially reduce the efficacy of the Superintendent's approval, especially as it encumbered efforts to begin program operations in the selected public schools.

The apparent contradiction in the Superintendent's actions may be traced to some of the competing influences operant on the Richmond Unified School District and to which a chief administrative officer might be especially sensitive. On one hand, and in explanation of the decision to approve the Program, the following partial list of influences unordered and of various magnitudes might be offered:

1. The School District had long recognized the need for community contacts,

expressing this concern through its support of Parent-Teacher Associations, "Back-to-School" nights, teacher-parent conferences, and open house programs. These mechanisms as dramatized by protest activities across the country were not adequate to maintain effective communications with the low-income community. Public school teachers and officials acknowledged the need for help in reaching this community to explain what the schools were trying to do. The Program offered a new resource to apply to this problem.

2. Sixteen years had elapsed since the last local tax increase. Funds for compensatory education were consistently unavailable. The Program offered $5,000 (the same amount offered to the Police Department) toward the School District's administrative costs relevant to the Program, as well as the full salary of the new careerists.

3. A member of the Special Projects Committee of the Contra Costa Council of Community Services (the Committee responsible for the Project) was also a member of the School Board of the Richmond Unified School District.

4. Refusing the offer of the Council of Community Services to provide funds to enable the School District to employ low-income persons might have been problematic for the School District.

5. The Project, though preferring to place new careerists in the schools,

was prepared to place them in other interested public agencies if the School District decided not to participate.

In explanation of weakening the decision to participate in the Program by delaying the necessary delegation of authority, the following partial list of influences, unordered and of various magnitudes might be offered:

1. At the time negotiations with the Project began the Richmond Unified School District was itself in the midst of being organized. (It came into official existence on July 1, 1965.) Involved with the problems of bringing coherence to a school district of 43,000 pupils, 2,500 employees, 47 elementary schools, etc., little priority could be given to the proposal of an outside agency whose essential offer to the District was the mere addition of five non-professional personnel.

2. The Contra Costa Council of Community Services and its Richmond Community Development Demonstration Project, if not suspect, were at least perceived as being oriented to a different constituency than that of the School District. While the former might have more substantial contacts in isolated locations and neighborhoods encompassed by the School District, the latter had to stay responsive to a much larger community including carrying an active concern for maintaining those conditions necessary to hold the white tax-paying middle-class in urban areas.

3. Even if not clearly or dominantly so, the Project staff and the as yet unhired new careerists were suspect on ideological grounds. They, at least in part, were perceived as representative of that group or tradition that "acted as if they held a copyright on the Negro", "don't understand the questions and don't care about the answers", "was interested in trying to prove the schools are bad", "didn't support the schools and generated lesser community confidence that the schools wanted to help, with the result that many did less well and then explained it by blaming the schools", "used the superintendent and the principals as whipping boys", etc.

4. The activity proposed by the Project was simply one of many proposals competing for a place in the School District, most of which were said to have been conceived and previously tried by school personnel. And this competition is continuous in an agency as large and as visible as the School District. Moreover, the Project's proposal was not perceived to be as important as other measures, such as those directed at reducing class size.

5. Whatever problem might arise from a refusal to participate in the Program, it could not represent a major threat to the School District. "We're very difficult to assault. Our ponderous qualities make us easy to defend", said one high ranking school official.

The reluctance of the Superintendent to have the School District become involved was also reflected in his anticipation of practical pro-

blems, any one of which might be decisive and which he saw as related to considerations beyond his immediate control. These included the lack of space in the schools to house the new careerists, the lack of the required supervisory time, and the probable unwillingness of the principals to accept this additional administrative burden. With the Superintendent's approval Project staff visited the schools likely to be involved and found that while such limitations were present in varying degrees, they were perceived more as obstacles than deadends. In part, this attitude of the principals may have reflected their understanding that the Program carried the Superintendent's approval.

The end of February could be said to coincide with the end of the initial phase of negotiations. Even if the results of this two months effort were perceived differently by the individuals involved and even if issues some considered decided were seen as open questions by others, the one really necessary decision had been made and was clear to all: the Richmond Unified School District would be one of the host agencies for the New Careers Program.

Program Continuance

Beginning in March the continuing School District Program dialogue was necessarily complicated by the gradual inclusion of other personnel from both agencies. During this planning phase problems of a more specific nature evolved, floating on the undercurrent of other continuing points of difference that had never been resolved, if indeed they were at all resolvable. But resolvable or not, acknowledged or not, these differences were always present subtly shaping the varying perceptions of program objectives, strategic choices, explanations of why things went "right" or "wrong", etc.

An inverted parallelism, for example, existed in relation to each agency's definition of means

and ends. From the Project's point of view, the promise of better school service was means to be used to achieve the end of creating new careers for low-income persons. From the School District's point of view, creating new careers for low-income persons was a means and not an especially preferred one, that had to prove itself in competition with other potential means for achieving the end of improved service levels.

Whatever the impact of this difference might have been under even the most congenial circumstances, it was exacerbated by some, particularly some on the Project staff who felt restive with the Program's limited means and still more limited objectives. Thus, if as mentioned earlier, School District personnel were at first tempted to see the Project staff as hostile, the latter at first could be faulted neither for over-identifying with the school system nor for too rigorously limiting their concerns to the expeditious and tactful accomplishment of program objectives.

Irritation with or frustration about the school system sometimes encouraged costly shortcuts: "The staff was not focussed on getting involvement from the schools in decision making," said one key Project staff member. This, in part and in turn, was rationalized by the problematic nature of the schools' orientation to decision making, characterized by this same member as being, "You tell us what you want to do, and we'll tell you if you can do it". In any case, and to whatever degree the characterization was accurate, it does seem clear that the Project staff was not at this time wholly or uniformly convinced that a relationship existed between their meaningful sharing of decisions with the schools and their successful attainment of Project objectives for the Program.

In spite of all else however, the School District-Project meetings that took place in March, April and May did significantly advance the needed specification of programmatic detail. Indeed, and with only minor exceptions, these

specifications continue to describe the program today, one full year later and five months after the new careerists actually began their regular school assignments. Some of the decisions made or problems discussed are listed as follows:

1. It was agreed that the five new careerists slated for assignments in the School District would be divided between two elementary schools located in predominantly Negro neighborhoods. Questioning that there was enough work for more than one new careerist in any one school (the two schools selected had student populations of 600 to 1,000), the School District personnel originally argued for separate placements in each of five schools. Project staff successfully resisted this view out of its own belief that a higher concentration of new careerists would produce more noticeable results. They were also concerned about the isolating effects upon the aides of separate work sites.

   One principal, several months after placements began, indicated that while he initially would have preferred only one new careerist, he now felt quite comfortable having three on his staff. On the other hand he thought that two such aides, "if they weren't off to meetings so much", could adequately handle the work load.

2. New careerists were to be regarded as members of the school staff with all rights and responsibilities attendant upon that status. The need for this decision arose in response to concerns expressed by a school principal that

the aides might misuse material arising out of informal discussions in teachers' lounges and inappropriately relate to their own children while at school. Project staff, in this instance, was able to offer sufficient assurances. (New careerists would be oriented to respect confidentiality, to refer their own children's problems to the proper school resource and to understand the function of criticism among school personnel as an informal mechanism for managing organizational tensions.)

A second principal, based on his own previous experience, was concerned that low-income persons raised to staff positions tended to be officious with other parents and children. Again, acceptable assurances were offered. (New careerists would not initiate contacts except at the direction of the principal and supervisor, and even then only to carry out courses of action specified by them. If problems of officiousness developed, corrective efforts could be initiated by school personnel.

3. A structure was developed within both the Project and the School District to implement the agreement to jointly supervise the new careerists. And of all decisions made, this is the one most uniformly regretted. While this regret was heavily conditioned by a continuously unsettled relationship between the two direct supervisors of the aides, there is also wide agreement that less idiosyncratic but more decisive flaws were operant. Among these were the following: the inevi-

tability of conflicting evaluations; competing pressures on the new careerists that would strain workers even far more sophisticated in the use of supervision; and increasingly confused channels through which supervisors of aides could themselves turn for direction. More generally and in addition to increasing the range and quantity of non-productive upset that would arise in a program of this kind, the joint supervisory arrangement probably made all conflicts and communications a more taxing, time-consuming management problem.

It is difficult to be sure what motivated the decision to share the supervisory responsibilities; it is still more difficult to know the degree to which either agency weighed the strains likely to arise against the advantages that might accrue from this arrangement. In either case, only the Project had a real choice to make. The School District, legally and publicly responsible for everything that happened in the schools, could not delegate that responsibility to an outside agency.

The Project's choice, however, was not a simple one to make, even if the staff well anticipated the problems. As an outside agency ideologically oriented to social change, sure of its commitment to the low-income community, and convinced the skills of its staff were relevant to the program as it would develop in the schools, a joint supervisory arrangement could appear to be a tempting strategic objective to pursue.

Informed by the results of that strategy and much clearer about its primary concern for creating career positions for low-income persons, the Project would today follow a course aimed at phasing itself out of the operation as quickly as possible. Indeed, whatever the degree of confidence Project staff may now feel about School District supervisory personnel, it is almost irrelevant to its current belief that the employing agency needs to exercise the supervisory controls. By this view, the continuing concern of the Project would be best and appropriately restricted to assuring compliance with the conditions specified in the contract that joins the two agencies and upon which the program rests.

4. A miscellany of simple, but necessary, assignments of responsibility were made covering such items as the required fingerprinting of aides, their signing of loyalty oaths and insurance coverage for each agency and new careerist. Attentive handling of these matters on the part of both agencies prevented the substantively simple from becoming procedurally complex.

5. The supervisor provided by the School District was located in its administratively separate guidance program, though each principal was nominally responsible for the work done by the new careerists. This arrangement was selected out of the belief that there would be a need for close supervision rooted in the perspectives of school guidance. A secondary, but reinforcing, consideration was the belief that the group of untrained aides would require more attention than any principal could give.

At least one principal has come to view this as an arrangement of only limited value. He agreed that the availability of the guidance supervisor enabled her to serve as an initially needed buffer between the School District and the Project and between each host school and its complement of new careerists. He disagreed, however, that this ought be a continuing feature of program structure. Once the aides had achieved a useful routine, "We could make better use of them if they were directly accountable to us (each specific school). They would do just what they are doing without need for a middleman".

Other decisions, of course, were made during this three month period and as the next section will detail, other major program developments occurred. The above is merely suggestive of some of the detail and hazards that marked the attempt to implement this small and seemingly simple program.

SCHOOL NEW CAREERIST

Recruitment and Selection

On March 20, 1965, Project staff distributed relevant materials (job description, salary scale, job applications, etc.) to a number of local agencies and organizations (including several with which it was working through its Indigenous Organizations Program) by way of announcing to the community that recruitment for the new careerist positions had begun. Within a month, 175 completed job applications had been submitted, 68 interviews had been held corresponding with the number of applications filed before the applications closing date) and 16 new careerists had been hired, five of whom were to be assigned to the Richmond Unified School District.

The two documents used by Project staff to guide themselves in negotiating the interviewing and selection process are drawn along different lines of emphasis. The first of these, the generally distributed school new careerist job description, (see Illustration B) seems to specify criteria consistent with the Project's primary program objective (i.e., hiring those "experimental" new careerists most likely to become permanent employees of the School District); the second, prepared primarily for staff use and entitled Indigenous Worker Timetable and Procedures, seems to specify criteria consistent with

the Project's more general orientation to social change (i.e., hiring new careerists most likely to be representative of the low-income community and most able to maintain and negotiate that difference through a variety of organizational contexts). Extracts from both documents illustrate that difference:

Job Description

Job Requirements: high school diploma or experience in a direct person to person relationship in school or social service related work such as the PTA, scouts, church work, neighborhood councils, etc.; capable of being trained for the job to be done; mature, motivated and able to relate to school personnel, students and parents; able to conduct home interviews and write records; capable of leading parent discussion groups and an ability to represent the school and discuss their programs and plans with community groups.

Timetable and Procedures

First priority to persons not presently or only marginally employed. Persons working as domestics, housekeepers, etc., will be considered unemployed...Priority given to persons classified as poor; and persons with income of $3,000 preferred over one with $5,000...Workers have to be sufficiently literate to write the required reports and verbal enough to communicate with other personnel with whom they work. Primary language skills should be in the language of low-income community... APPLICANT'S ABILITY TO COMPLETE APPLICATION FORM SHOULD NOT BE THE CRITICAL DETERMINANT OF THEIR LITERACY LEVEL. (emphasis theirs) This should be estimated

in the interview...It would probably be most desirable if we could recruit those who are the informal leaders of the low-income community...Those persons who have been involved in self-help oriented social action would most likely be the persons we want to hire...Whereas, high school graduation is desirable, it is not required. Rather, we want people who may have been active in PTA, labor, neighborhood councils, scouts, civil rights groups, etc. Familiarity with organized citizen effort is highly desirable.

Receiving as many as 175 applications for the 16 available positions, a not uncommon result in those anti-poverty programs offering jobs to low-income persons, created an unanticipated problem for the Project. Many of those rejected reacted vigorously and sought redress of their grievance through civil rights organizations, the local press, elected officials and friends and relatives. Though made easier by the clarity of the job qualifications and hiring procedures, Project staff was still dealing with the fallout from this issue well after the selection of new careerists had been completed. (The five persons working in the School District, incidentally, said that the Project had no choice but to broadly announce the availability of positions, that the large response showed that the low-income community wanted to be put to work and that they knew that they had been competing for a limited number of positions and thus would have accepted rejection more calmly.)

Job applicants were permitted to specify the organizational assignment they preferred. Project staff reported, however, that the vast majority of applicants were interested in <u>any</u> job. Where choices were expressed they seemed to reflect the applicant's understanding of just which positions were most likely to be permanent ones.

The following, taken from the Project's progress report to the Office of Economic Opportunity, describes the complement of new careerists selected:

All are Negro (only one Caucasian applied, but did not qualify);
Ten females - six males;
Nine were receiving some type of Public Welfare Aid;
Thirteen married; one single; two divorced or separated;
All are over age 21...median age is 33;
Number of children ranges from 0 to 11.... with an average of 4;
Thirteen finished high school.
Six had not worked for three years or more.
Previous work experiences were as domestics, janitors, busboys and practical nurses. One worker is a minister of a small church.
Based on education and work experience, 11 were hired at $4,300 per year; the five others were hired at salaries between $3,700 and $4,150 per year. (It is the Project's current view, however, that previous job experience was unrelated to new careerist job performance.)

While school personnel expected to be involved in the interviewing and selection of new careerists, Project staff carried the process almost entirely by itself. Operationally, it left to the District only the power to veto persons being considered for assignment to the District. In retrospect, however, both the School District and the Project have come to view this as one of the larger errors committed in planning and implementing the Program.

Orientation and Training

On April 19, 1965 the new careerists reported for work to the Project office, thus launching

what it was hoped would indeed become their new careers. The group, including the three women and two men who would be joining the staff of the Richmond Unified School District, immediately entered into an orientation and training program that would continue for approximately nine weeks.

A detailed description of the initial orientation and continuing training program for the total group of new careerists is available in a separate Project publication.(3) For present purposes the following, excerpted from the Project progress report, may be sufficient:

"The orientation included introduction to the project staff and programs, visits to local agencies and organizations (particularly those with services related to their particular jobs), attendance at community meetings, review of the programs of the agencies at which they would be working and visits to different neighborhoods in the community....Short-term assignments included being trained and doing interviewing for the Survey Research Center; recruiting teenagers for a Youth-Police Relations program; recruiting for the Job Corps and for study halls; recruiting parents for Operation Head-Start and nursery school programs; and serving as teacher-aides in pre-kindergarten classes. These assignments, which lasted anywhere between one and twenty days gave the new careerists a chance to test out some of the things they were learning in discussions and visits.

These brief assignments gave the staff an opportunity to assess the careerists as individuals and as a group before they moved into their permanent jobs. Thus, for example, it became evident that a few of the workers had great diffidulty in reading and writing reports and they needed special help with this. Others were fearful of the jobs they were undertaking and the short-term assignments gave them an opportunity to see and evaluate some of their own

problems and strengths....Interestingly, the new careerists themselves recently instituted the practice at each of their weekly meetings of having one of their number give an oral presentation of his work in order to become more proficient at speaking before a group.

Throughout the orientation period, stress was given to several techniques: staff attempted to involve the new careerists in as many doing and acting out activities as possible; material always stressed the practical and the specific; all training took place in a group; training was related to specific assignments. For example, in the orientation to welfare agencies the staff arranged for new careerists to "go through the mill", i.e., to see how clients made appointments, filled out applications and what an "intake" appointment was like. These visits were followed up with group discussions. Careerists were asked to write up their experience and they would then review and criticize some of these reports.

The changes in role which the new careerist experiences create many strains for him. An orientation period which allows him an opportunity to ease into his new job relieves that strain to some extent. For example, new careerists faced problems in arranging their family life (child care, housework, etc.); in explaining their new position to their family and friends; in dealing with unpaid debts and changing their status with the Department of Welfare; in clarifying their feelings about being publicly identified as a "poverty" group and an "experimental" group; and in their feelings about one another's behavior."

Generally speaking, the on-going training of all the new careerists has taken the form of group conferences held once a week at the Project offices, in addition to whatever formal and informal training occurs under the sponsorship of each host agency. During the summer months the school new careerists also participated in a

separate program specifically oriented to their jobs in the schools. This was made possible when the Project temporarily hired the School District counselor who would supervise their in-school work during the coming academic year. The content of these sessions included the new careerists' perceptions of the schools, the structure of the newly created Richmond Unified School District, school discipline policies and practices, various problems as seen by the schools, recording and interviewing, and by then, the expanded school new careerist job description.

The nation-wide launching of Operation Head-Start provided a fortuitous work and training opportunity for the aides. Through it they became involved in a new School District program, and one very much tied to the anti-poverty effort, well before the start of the regular academic year in September. In addition to serving as assistants in Head-Start groups, they also contributed to the extensive recruitment effort required to fill the 1,200 places provided in the program. To accomplish the latter, new careerists distributed applications on a door-to-door basis and spoke at churches attended by the population being sought for the program.

Toward the end of the summer program the school new careerists, through their supervisors, entered their own evaluation of the operation, including some specific criticisms of the regular teachers employed in it. Whatever the substantive merit of these criticisms, the act of putting them forth was the first test of their capacity to criticize school operations, methods and personnel within the limitations of their emerging role as members of the school staff. In this experience there seems to have been little to document the fear of several school officials that the new careerists might undermine the schools.

Interviewed as a group several months after assuming their regular job duties, the school

new careerists put a positive, albeit global, evaluation on the orientation and training program that had been arranged for them. The only change recommended by the actual requirements of their tasks, they indicated, would be for more attention to report writing and community organization techniques.

A final training structure, a series of seminars offered by the Social Welfare Extension of the University of California at Berkeley, is currently being developed. These seminars would involve both the school new careerists and the supervisory personnel of the Program. (A later Project publication will detail this programmatic experience.)

THE IN-SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

The school new careerists (now officially designated as "school-community workers") reported to their assigned schools in early September, supported by a newly drafted, relatively specific addendum (see Illustration C) to the job description that had been prepared the previous March. Guided by this addendum they have been working, at the time of this writing, for five months at their "new careers" in the public schools.

While some variation exists, there is a good degree of conformance in the tasks performed by the school-community workers housed in the two elementary schools that serve as host agencies for the Program. The minutes of a meeting held on December 2, 1965, attended by School District and Project staff members, offers one classification of such tasks, as reported by the workers' school supervisor:

"Individual case work in which the SCW conducts a continued relationship with the student, his parents and his teacher...Experience has shown that eight is a manageable case load.

Direct referrals of students whose classroom behavior has required immediate attention.... Prior to the SCW Program, many of these students would have been suspended because there was no other way of handling such eruptions and disturbances. (One school) has made much use of this type of referral service.

Community contacts in which school programs are interpreted to the parents and support for the school PTA is developed. The PTA attendance (at one school) increased from almost complete non-attendance to approximately fifty as a result of this service. It has been found that parents who are brought to such meetings often express negative feelings about the school program. The net result, however, is an active interest in the school which did not exist prior to the organizational work of the SCW."

In addition to confirming much of the above, a more random listing of tasks was gleaned from interviews with various Project and School personnel concerned with the Program. This included organizing noontime softball leagues in the schoolyard; escorting children home who had fallen ill at school and making arrangements for them if their parents were not at home to receive them; leading small discussion groups formed at PTA meetings; participating in school staff meetings; encouraging an individual parent to visit the school to meet with her child's teachers; and interpreting to individual parents the school's reasons for making various decisions about her child (e.g., recommendation for home teaching, change of class, etc.).

Judging at least from the one group interview held with the school community workers, there seems to be little doubt as to how they themsleves view their contribution to the School District. They spoke much about their general responsibility to help the community organize to address the schools more effectively. But they seemed much more certain of and specific about their efforts with individual youngsters and parents. No challenge of these efforts could weaken their firm belief that they, and in larger numbers, belonged in the schools because, "We show concern." When, for example, the interviewer suggested that the compassion they showed also typified many new and enthusiastic middle-class professionals who often lost this

quality once they discovered that they couldn't really change things very much, one of the new careerists insisted agitatedly, "We won't change! We live in this community. This is my neighborhood. We won't change because these are our problems". Even more striking to the interviewer, however, was the very modestly offered account of another new careerist who, without supervisory direction or prompting, taught herself the manual alphabet so that she could better communicate with the deaf parent of a child who was experiencing difficulty at school.

While understandably more cautious and not nearly so uniform, commendation or recognition of the school community workers by School District personnel has been freely and frequently voiced, as suggested by the following quotations noted in interviews with school personnel or taken from documents prepared by them:

"Mr. X (a principal) agreed that the work of the SCW in his school has generally been excellent and the services have contributed positively to the educational program at (his school);

Mr. Y (a principal) described his early concerns about the SCW program. Prior to the opening of the fall session, he was worried about the possibility that the workers would be agitators within the community and might create additional problems for the school. He agreed, however, that so far his concerns have been completely groundless. Not one single case of parental criticism of the school has resulted from a contact by a worker. On the contrary, he has seen a great deal of positive value to the educational program (of his school) as a result of the work by the SCW...Mr. Y has noted a great deal of growth on the part of the workers, particularly in their understanding of the kinds of problems which face schools and teachers;

Principal Y and his teachers are appreciative of the aides;

The aides can and are performing a valuable liaison function. They can and do establish rapport;

We were considering recommending home teaching for one child who is emotionally disturbed. The aide suggested that we first try changing the child's teacher. We followed that suggestion, but it didn't work. This convinced the aide, who now served as a successful intermediary for us in helping the family cooperate with the home teaching arrangement.

The aides have enlightened me on several things. They brought to my attention the fact that the children's water fountains weren't working properly. They also informed me that parents saw teachers wearing sneakers in the schoolyard and thought that this was degrading of the community. They identified for me the one teacher in my school who parents thought dressed in a way that should serve as a model for all teachers."

Problems have, of course, also been noted. One category of these could be identified as deficiencies of the new careerists themselves, correctable through further training and/or experience, or avoidable through task specification less tempting of these deficiencies. Experience and training, for example, could help overcome what one school supervisor identified as, "...insecurity in face-to-face discussions with parents concerning the in-school behavior and progress of individual children...differences in their abilities to empathize with children, in their abilities to organize their work and in maintaining case histories...a lack in writing skills...spelling, grammar and structure are particularly weak". The problem aides had in tutoring individual children incidental to their counselling involvements with them was avoided when one school lowered its expectation that tutoring by the aides be part of such counselling situations.

A second category of problem would seem to involve the schools and the aides equally. The major example under this heading is, obviously,

achieving within the schools that variety of acceptance of the aides and their function which cannot be conferred by administrative edict or any other self-conscious, ephemeral, facile exercise of intra-organizational politeness. The proud, even defiant, boast of the new careerists at an interview held in January 1966 that they were a close unbreakable group may, indeed, reflect the truth of one Project worker's statement of a month earlier that, "The workers are unsure about their relationships with the principal, the teachers and the custodians".

The third category of problem involved the aides in no direct way; it is the problem of the continuing, still evolving relationship between the two organizational sponsors of the Program. Some potentially unsettling issues seem to have been neutralized. Though each agency still pursues its own ordered version of Program objectives, the difference is broadly recognized and largely defined as both understandable and acceptable. Though the schools do not necessarily value community organization activities directed at a community, it feels there is much more eagerness to complain about the schools than to applaud them, school new careerists are permitted to stimulate communal approaches to the schools. Some Project staff, who originally tended to see the aides as agents for changing the schools, have "agreed that the School Community Worker is a school representative and as such has to see himself as clearly identified with the school;" etc.

Other issues are more alive. Though fully cognizant of the difficulties that inhere in a joint supervisory arrangement, for example, a stream of joint meetings and memoranda still direct themselves to specify and re-specify who-is-what in the chain of command, in the obvious hope that such clarity will minimize the problem.(4) And if this problem would recede, training might become more of an issue than it has been to date. Project sponsored training

obviously represents an opportunity for the Project to influence the in-school behavior of the aides. From the school's point of view, such formalized training, though admittedly responsive to the new careerists' natural and demonstrated desire to advance their knowledge and skills, is not necessarily functional to the schools' requirements.

THE CITIZENS' REVIEW COMMITTEE

The recently signed, but long informally operative, contract between the Project and the School District lists the following as its final condition:

"A citizens' committee will be developed which will periodically review the progress of the project. The composition of the committee will be determined by the Council's (i.e., the Contra Costa Council of Community Services) Richmond Projects Committee and the Schools."

This provision was first suggested by the Project to contribute to the information available to the School District when it faced the inevitable and crucial question that only it could decide: Should the employment of low-income persons to deliver school services be made a continuing, and eventually permanent, feature of Richmond's system of public education?

If the School District were to treat the findings of the Committee as significant, it would have to regard its members as significant. To insure this it was later agreed that five of the nine Committee members would be appointed by the School District. (The Project appointed three housewives and a minister; the School District appointed a school principal, a public health professional, a mental health profession-

al, a professor of education, and teacher-housewive well-known amongst civil rights organizations. In addition, the person assigned to staff the Committee was to be one of the school employees officially connected to the Program. The Project supported the appropriateness of these arrangements.

The Committee meets every two weeks and is expected to continue to do so until it submits its report to the Project and the Board of Education sometime during the summer of 1966. By way of preparing for that report, interviews have already been held with new careerists and Project and School District staff members.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

To the extent that demonstration projects "succeed" not by achieving their immediate objectives, but rather by encouraging more advanced efforts in other places and at other times, the catalogue of resolved and unresolved problems contained herein may be useful. In concluding this intendedly descriptive document, however, no attempt will be made to restate this inventory of problems, errors and solutions; nor will any attempt be made to formulate or recommend generalizations beyond the degree to which they may have been previously implied or suggested.

This final word, instead, is given over to identifying those additional considerations that presumably influenced the development of the New Careers Program, but which could not be specified to any particular event. It seems clear, for example, that the process of negotiating and implementing the Program has had more of an exhausting effect on Project staff than on School District personnel; and even if at a lesser pace, it probably will continue to do so. Indeed, the discrepancy may be unavoidable, for it seems less related to the energy various workers expend in accomplishing their tasks than it does to the fact that what was a major activity to the Project could only be a tangential distraction to the School District. Given the stake

the Project had in the outcome of this activity it almost needed to be more effected by the ebb and flow of events than did the School District with its many other and more primary responsibilities.

Some energy was undoubtedly conserved when the Project, as it entered into negotiations with the School District, made the deliberate decision to be vague about many program details. This was done both to encourage the School District to participate in making these decisions, as well as to avoid the problem of having to negotiate from "hard" positions. It also seems probable that the Project at the time negotiations began was itself unclear about which of its program notions were important enough to be prescribed, which were promising enough to be preferred, which were irrelevant enough to be permitted, and which were threatening enough to be proscribed. (The joint supervisory structure, for example, probably moved through each of these definitions during the course of the first year of program operations.)

Finally, it should already be clear that the School District's ultimate decision about the Program will be the resultant of many influences, only one of which is the evaluation given to the school-community workers' job performance or contribution to public education in Richmond. The availability of funds, the variety of other projects developed within the School District, and the School District's own definition of what underlies school problems are only some of these influences, most of which are well beyond the Project's capacity to address.

Both the Project and the School District will, of course, come to their own evaluation of the New Careers Program. If the reader, however, must also judge it, the criterion set by Dr. George James, and each is free to apply it, may be the most important:

"...the task of leadership for the future must emphasize the need to be relevant more than the responsibility to be right. If we can lead into relevant paths, our effort, even though wrong, will focus attention on the important issues, will attract productive controversy, will raise the priority of the significant problem, and should thereby result in far more human progress. To be right though irrelevant will confuse and delay and merely postpone an attack upon the key issues of our times. (5)

ILLUSTRATION A

AGREEMENT WITH RICHMOND SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Agreement between the Contra Costa Council of Community Services (Council) and the Richmond School District (Schools) based upon the research-demonstration proposal entitled "Richmond Community Development Demonstration Project" and refers to the parts of the proposal which deals with the public schools. This agreement describes the commitments and responsibilities of the Council and the Schools.

Five "new careerists", low-income people who reside in the low-income areas to be served by the project, are to be trained for a new service job within the Schools. The new careerists, who are to be hired and paid by the Council and housed at the Schools, will be trained by supervisory personnel of the Council and the Schools to undertake responsibilities in helping clients of the Schools to deal with problems they have which are related to the School's area of service. New careerists will be supervised by both the Council and the Schools in their work.

Payments and Expenses

The Council will provide the School with the sum of $5,000 toward the annual salary of the School Supervisor to pay for the School Supervisor's responsibilities for the program. This amount will be paid to the Schools in semi-annual payments. This payment is intended to provide the cost of direct supervision of new careerists by the School. The School will provide the supervisory and administrative time needed for planning within the Schools, contacts

with School personnel, training of School personnel, and evaluation and review of the program.

The Council will reimburse the School Supervisor for travel expenses and other personal expenses related to the new careers program.

The Council will pay for program materials and costs related to the training of new careerists and development of the new careers program such as special books and materials, speakers and consultants.

The new careerists shall be housed at the Schools to which they are assigned with appropriate work space to write reports and to meet with parents. The present plan calls for three new careerists to be placed at Nystrom and two to be placed at Verde.

Dates

The period covered by this agreement is September 1, 1965 through June 30, 1966. The program is to begin on September 1, 1965 at which time the first semi-annual payment will be made. Second payment is to be paid on February 28, 1966. The program is to continue until June 30, 1966. The School will provide a statement describing the use of funds received at the close of each payment period. The program can be renewed for the following year if funds are available, in which case this agreement should be renewed by May 30, 1966. The status of this agreement can be changed with 30 days written notice from either the Council or the Schools. Any payments made to or due from the Council or Schools shall be pro-rated effective to that date of notice. The following is the time schedule that will be used approximately:

July 1, 1965 to August 31, 1965.....

(Insofar as this period is prior to the contract period, the Council will arrange to pay the School's Supervisor directly

for whatever time is needed from her during this period.) Supervisors develop qualifications, requirements, job descriptions for hiring of new careerists and orientation and training.

September 1, 1965 to September 30, 1965...

Placement of New Careerists in temporary assignments.

October 1, 1965.....

Permanent Assignments.

Responsibilities of Supervisors

The qualifications and requirements for new careerists shall be developed jointly by the Council supervisor and the School's supervisor within the framework described in the proposal.

The supervisors will develop guides providing the qualifications of applicants for the position, recruitment procedures geared to engaging qualified applicants, and procedures and methods for orientation and training.

A major concern of the Project is to develop methods and processes by which the functions performed by new careerists are evaluated and changed and devising methods by which functions which prove to be effective become a part of the School's operation.

The Council supervisor will recruit and interview new careerists. New careerists will be selected from the grade school attendance area served and must be approved by the school principal.

Job descriptions and specific assignments will be made jointly by the Council's and School's supervisors.

Supervision of the work of new careerists shall be the joint responsibility of both supervisors. An administrative staff member of the

Council and an administrative staff member of the School will be assigned the responsibility for resolving questions which supervisors cannot settle. These administrative staff members should be sufficiently acquainted with the day-to-day operation of the program to be able to anticipate such questions.

Responsibilities of New Careerists

New Careerists are to be assigned to work in counseling programs of elementary schools in low-income areas. Their work should consist of helping parents of students to deal with some of their school-related problems. In addition, new careerists should be working with groups and organizations in the low-income community to interpret the services and functions of the School and to help individuals and organizations in efforts to deal with problems.

New Careerists are to be trained in using reporting procedures so that the same information on their work will be available to both the Council supervisor and the School supervisor.

Responsibilities of the Council and the Schools

The Council and the School supervisors will develop a seminar in which new careerists, supervisors and related personnel will participate. The seminar should begin no later than one month after the new careerists receive their permanent assignments and should be held approximately once a month. The seminar should deal with community problems and minority groups as well as with the kinds of technical and substantive problems dealt with by new careerists. The seminar should be attended by new careerists, the two supervisors and School personnel who are working with similar problems such as guidance counselors in the schools with new careerists and other guidance personnel.

The Council supervisor will write a quarterly report on the program which will be available to the personnel of the Council and the Schools.

A Citizens' Committee will be developed which will periodically review the progress of the project. The composition of this committee will be determined by the Council's Richmond Projects Committee and the School.

ILLUSTRATION B
JOB DESCRIPTION
TITLE: School New Careerist

Job Requirments

A High School diploma and/or paid or volunteer experience in a direct person to person relationship in the schools or social service related work such as the PTA, scouts, church work, neighborhood councils, etc., personal knowledge of the community where assigned with some understanding of the concerns and problems of the residents; capable of being trained for the job to be done; mature, motivated and able to relate to school personnel, students and parents; able to conduct home interviews and write records and make reports; capable of leading parent discussion groups and an ability to represent the school and discuss their programs and plans with community groups.

Age

Twenty-one years old and over.

Residence

The School Careerist must have lived in Richmond at least one year and must presently be a resident in the low-income area which includes North Richmond and Parchester areas and the elementary school districts of Coronado, Cortez, Lincoln, Nystrom, Peres and Stege Schools.

Supervisor

The School Careerist will be located in one elementary school in the low-income community and will be supervised by the school supervisor

assigned to the project in all matters primarily related to the performance of school responsibilities. He will operate within the normal administrative function of the school in which he is located.

The Project New Careers Supervisor will be primarily responsible for administrative and community related responsibilities and training.

Job Responsibilities

a) Participate in the training program established by the Richmond Community Development Demonstration and Youth Projects, as well as appropriate training programs established by the school department.

b) Will be located in a school and will work with the school counseling staff, teachers and other related personnel. Assignment may include participation in such responsibilities as: conducting home visits to discuss and interpret school problems and programs; development of parent discussion groups dealing with problems of discipline, curriculum and educational planning; participation in compensatory education programs for parents and children; and representation and interpretation of school programs to community groups.

c) Maintain appropriate and required written records and reports.

d) Participate in gathering, developing, interpreting and evaluating appropriate data concerning the school neighborhood.

e) Permanent employment and assignment of the School New Careerist will begin in September 1965. On or about April 1965

he will be assigned to the research interview program; on or about May 15, 1965 he will be assigned as a recruiter with the Richmond Youth Project; on or about July 1, 1965, he may be assigned as teacher aide in the pre-kindergarten program. This assignment may include such responsibilities as: interviewing parents to explain the program and register participants; meeting with parent groups; assisting a family in securing a special service in the larger community; and assisting the teacher in the Richmond School District's pre-kindergarten summer program.

ILLUSTRATION C

ADDENDUM TO JOB RESPONSIBILITIES SECTION OF SCHOOL-NEW CAREERISTS JOB DESCRIPTION

1. The School-New Careerists shall be officially known as School-Community Worker.

2. The School-Community Worker (SCW) shall, with the approval of the School Department Supervisor and the School Administrator, conduct home visits to the students home:

   - to determine feelings and attitudes of parents toward the school and about problems the child is having at school;

   - to interpret the events or occurrences about which the School is concerned;

   - to offer and provide whatever assistance the family may need to have in order to become fully involved in attempting to deal with the problems or conditions affecting their child, including social, health and academic;

   - to help the family participate actively in all phases of school life;

   - to help the family visit the school and participate actively in discussion and planning with school personnel relative to their child.

3. The School-Community Worker will seek out and meet with community groups and leaders in the school neighborhood (neighborhood council, block clubs, churches, ministers, etc.) and will interpret and explain school programs,

and policies from the school perspective. They will also attempt to involve these groups in thinking through and developing ways and means for them to become positively related to the schools and school programs. The SCW will relate to the appropriate personnel in the schools, the attitudes and concerns of these citizens and groups as they are expressed and have bearing on school programs.

4. The SCW may provide an added resource to the schools in dealing with in-school behavior problems. This might be accomplished by teachers referring youngsters to the "counseling office" with the approval of the school administrator, as an isolation technique and where the youngster may be able to relate to the SCW as a "friendly adult" who can provide atmosphere for "cooling off" as well as a willing ear.

5. The SCW may take special note of frequent problem categories for which appropriate service resources (in the school or community) are either inadequate or non-existent. Such problem identification could be used by the schools and other groups and institutions in the community for planning and expanding services. This might include absence of facilities for emotionally disturbed children or developing effective alternatives to suspension.

6. The SCW, upon assignment by the school supervisor or school administrator will work with other agencies in the community that might be concerned with a particular family or problem.

7. Assignment of the SCW to all cases will be made with the approval of the school supervisor and the school administrator.

8. The SCW will work forty hours per week. The daily work schedule will be 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with adjustments of daily schedule being made to meet the requirements of the specific situation. The SCW will have a sign-in book at the office of the respective schools and will keep the school office, the school supervisor or the school administrator informed of their whereabouts during the course of the day and of any schedule change. The SCW will be covered by the provisions of the personnel code of the Contra Costa Council of Community Services.

9. The SCW is in a particularly sensitive position in the community relative to the receipt of information. It is just such a position, which should enable the attainment of one of the primary goals of the program--bridging communication gaps. The SCW will have to be sure to clearly identify himself and his relationship to the schools in his contacts with clients. He should be sure to inform the client that all information will be treated confidentially but that it is his responsibility to share this information with his supervisor and school administrator in order to best provide any help that may be indicated.

   The presence of the SCW in this sensitive position should enable the schools to develop increasing use of informal procedures in dealing with problems and increasing reliance in intra-school and community referral resources.

10. The SCW may be used to provide whatever aids, supports, or help to the family that are indicated and planned with the supervisor. Flexible use of the SCW is desirable in this regard.

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(2) Gordon E. Misner, The Development of "New Careerist" Positions in the Richmond Police Department, Contra Costa Council of Community Services, Walnut Creek, California, January, 1966 - #103.

(3) Anatole Shaffer and Harry Specht, Training the Poor for New Careers, Contra Costa Council of Community Services, Walnut Creek, California, March, 1966 - #105.

(4) The problem may now be near solution, though it is not yet certain what new problems may emerge from this solution. At the end of the first year of the Program, Project staff reached the conclusion that joint supervision was unsatisfactory. Even more important than the strains it created for all staff involved, it continuously threatened to subvert the major Project objective (incorporation of the Program as a permanent feature of the School District). Consequently, in the second year, it was agreed that school personnel assume the full responsibility, while a "Project Liaison Officer" carry responsibility for insuring Project and School District compliance with all contractual and other commitments.

(5) George James, "Emerging Trends in Public Health and Possible Reactions", Public Health Reports, Vol. 80, Number 7, July, 1965, pp. 579-586.